

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY TOKYO
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S E C R E T STATE 188336

NODIS
FOR AMBASSADOR MANSFIELD FROM ASSISTANT SECY HOLBROOKE

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PDIP, US, VM, JA

SUBJECT: US-SRV RELATIONS
REF:
A) TOKYO 12285; B) STATE 184093

1. I WANT TO THANK YOU FOR THE GOOD CABLE DETAILING YOUR CONVERSATIONS WITH FOREIGN MINISTER SONODA ON JULY 5. SONODA'S PERSONAL ACCOUNT OF HIS PHAN HIEN CONVERSATION WAS MOST VALUABLE IN GIVING US AN UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT APPEARS TO BE A SIGNIFICANT SHIFT IN THE VIETNAMESE POSITION ON NORMALIZATION OF RELATIONS WITH THE U.S. PLEASE EXPRESS MY PERSONAL APPRECIATION TO SONODA FOR PASSING ON PHAN HIEN'S VIEWS TO US.

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2. I DO NOT THINK IT NECESSARY TO ASK SONODA TO DO ANYTHING FURTHER WITH THE VIETNAMESE IN TERMS OF A COMMENT ON PHAN HIEN'S OBSERVATIONS. DURING HIS SUBSEQUENT VISITS TO AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND, PHAN HIEN REPEATED IN PUBLIC THE SENSE OF HIS TOKYO PRESS CONFERENCE STATEMENTS ON NORMALIZATION. AT ROUGHLY THE SAME TIME WE HAVE HAD SIMILAR PUBLIC UTTERANCES FROM VICE FOREIGN MINISTER NGUYEN CO THACH,

TRAVELLING IN EUROPE, AND FROM SPOKESMAN NGO DIEN. WE HAVE ALSO HAD MORE PRECISE EXPRESSIONS OF THIS APPARENT SHIFT

IN ATTITUDE PASSED THROUGH THIRD COUNTRY DIPLOMATS. SONODA'S, HOWEVER, WAS THE MOST AUTHORITATIVE AND DIRECT, AND THEREFORE ESPECIALLY VALUABLE TO US.

3. YOU WILL HAVE RECEIVED STATE 184093 WHICH CONTAINS OUR ASSESSMENT OF THE PRESENT INDOCHINA TURMOIL AND ITS IMPLICATIONS. THIS WOULD BE A USEFUL ANALYSIS TO SHARE CONFIDENTIALLY WITH SONODA, AND I BELIEVE IT ADDRESSES THE CONCERNS WHICH HE RAISED IN HIS CONVERSATION WITH YOU JULY 5. YOU MAY WISH TO AMPLIFY THE POINT ON THE RECENT MEETING OF US-SRV MIA SPECIALISTS IN HAWAII. THE VIETNAMESE TEAM ATTEMPTED TO PROJECT A SENSE OF COOPERATION ON THE MIA ISSUE AND WE WOULD HOPE TO RECEIVE CONCRETE RESULTS (INFORMATION AND/OR REMAINS) WITHIN THE NEXT TWO MONTHS. MOREOVER, THE VIETNAMESE TEAM LOST NO OPPORTUNITY TO IMPRESS ON US THEIR "CHANGED ATTITUDE" ON NORMALIZATION. THEY REINFORCED THE IMPRESSION THAT CONSIDERATION OF THE "WOUNDS OF WAR" QUESTION HAS BEEN RELEGATED BY THEM TO SOME INDEFINITE FUTURE TIME.

4. AS FAR AS NEXT POSSIBLE STEPS IN NORMALIZATION ARE CONCERNED, I THINK WE MUST WAIT AND SEE WHAT THE VIETNAMESE COME FORWARD WITH IN THE WAY OF A FORMAL NEGOTIATING POSITION.
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TION. WE WILL HAVE A BETTER SENSE OF THIS WHEN I MEET WITH SRV REPRESENTATIVES DURING THE UNGA IN LATE SEPTEMBER. UNTIL THEN, WHILE I AM ENCOURAGED BY THESE SIGNS OF REASONABLENESS ON THE PART OF THE VIETNAMESE (ADMITTEDLY UNDER DURESS), I AGREE THAT IT WOULD BE WISE TO REFRAIN FROM EXCESSIVE OPTIMISM AS TO THE FUTURE COURSE OF US-SRV RELATIONS. VANCE

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